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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 SINGAPORE 001028

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TAGS: PTER PREL SN

SUBJECT: GWOT ASSESSMENT: PERSPECTIVE FROM SINGAPORE

REF: STATE 60794

Classified By: Amb. Franklin L. Lavin, Reasons 1.4(b)(d)

¶11. (S/NF) Singapore has been a reliable and highly capable partner in the global war on terrorism, as it shares our concerns about terrorism and possesses the political will and capabilities to confront it. Over the last several years, Singapore has publicly supported our CT efforts, even providing military support for Coalition activities in Afghanistan and Iraq. Singapore has signed up for a range of CT programs here: the Container Security Initiative (CSI), DOE's Megaports and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and has actively promoted enhanced maritime security in the Malacca Strait.

More Good Work Can Be Done

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¶12. (S/NF) Despite Singapore's strong record to date, many areas of cooperation remain fertile for further development. Some suggestions:

A) Singapore is strengthening its non-proliferation trade control regime; it wants to learn from us and work with us more operationally. Intelligence exchanges of very sensitive CT information have expanded tremendously in the last few years and Singapore has proven judiciously protective of those confidences. We need now to consider how to increase sharing of intelligence on counter-proliferation to improve Singapore's ability to prevent abuse of this huge entrepot for shipments of WMD and related items.

B) Singapore has proven a very useful "test bed" for trying out new DoD technology and techniques, on a small, controllable scale. We should consider working with Singapore to try out more CT tools, including systems of interest to DHS (tracking systems for people, goods and money, for instance).

C) As part of our Maritime Security Initiative, Singapore could prove a useful partner in developing our UAV capabilities in the region, and has expressed an interest in providing basing support for our Global Hawk. We expect this will have to wait for Global Hawks to be freed up from Iraq/Afghanistan duty and for Australia to come on-line first. But, it's something we should start thinking about now.

D) Our current law enforcement cooperation is "good" but not "excellent." A Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) would improve law enforcement cooperation with Singapore, a key node for regional law enforcement work. We should re-invigorate our efforts to negotiate an MLAT and consider other methods to improve cooperation at the investigation stage of criminal cases.

E) We are doing more with Regional Affairs than ever before, but we can still do more.

Leveraging This Relationship

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¶13. (S/NF) Singapore is frequently a "first adopter" of our CT initiatives in the region, with nearby countries tending to follow suit. For example, Singapore has taken the regional lead on maritime security issues and others followed -- after Singapore and the United States "re-packaged" the initiative. And, after the GOS started to deploy military assets on cargo ships to ward off piracy attacks, Malaysia decided to do so as well. We can leverage Singapore's willingness to build regional political will to combat terrorism, especially when direct USG involvement carries some political baggage. Similarly, in some circumstances regional organizations, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), can help promote our CT objectives in a multilateral setting.

Some Structural Weaknesses Remain

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¶14. (S/NF) In ramping up our CT relationship with Singapore, we need recognize a few factors that may limit the growth or direction of the cooperation. First, a perception of overly close U.S.-Singapore cooperation can engender resistance

among other regional countries. Second, Singapore's government structure makes it hard for them to understand open political systems. Thus, they often don't understand or approve of what's happening in, say, Indonesia or Taiwan. Third, as a small country in some ways reliant on our mutual friendship, they view influencing perceptions within the U.S. government as a key element of their national security. This occasionally leads them to "over spinning."

Moving the Talking Point Beyond "Counterterrorism"

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¶ 5. (S/NF) Finally, we believe we can sometimes better achieve our goals by packaging them as part of a broader problem: drug smuggling, human trafficking, money laundering, and piracy, to name a few. To the extent we can embed our CT initiatives in these other issues, we are likely to meet with greater support in the region.

LAVIN